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## EPA Obtains Warrant to Address Over 1,000 Drums and Containers at New Jersey Facility

An ongoing investigation by EPA reveals the presence of hazardous materials at a company in Elk Township, N.J.

[Sandy Smith](#)

Oct. 17, 2013

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**Cleanup work will begin soon at the Superior Barrel & Drum company facility in Elk Township, N.J., where more than 1,000 unlabeled or improperly labeled drums and other containers have been left in a state of disrepair.**  
EPA

EPA has obtained a federal warrant to do the necessary cleanup work at the Superior Barrel & Drum company facility in Elk Township, N.J., where more than 1,000 unlabeled or improperly labeled drums and other containers have been left in a state of disrepair. Many of the drums are leaking their contents onto the ground and are exposed to wind and rain.

“This facility contains a large number of barrels that need to be addressed. The EPA intends to do everything necessary to ensure that hazardous materials at the facility do not harm the public,” said Judith A. Enck, EPA regional administrator. “The EPA’s top priority is preventing a release, fire or explosion that could endanger the community or pollute the environment.”

EPA and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) currently are investigating the drums and containers at the site under a warrant that previously was issued by a federal judge when the facility owner refused to give EPA access to the facility. EPA is working with Elk Township, the local fire and police departments and the NJDEP on the investigation and cleanup of the facility.

“Conditions at this facility are inexcusable,” New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin said. “The DEP will continue to work with the Environmental Protection Agency on the categorization and safe removal of these materials, as well as soil testing and monitoring to ensure the environment and public health are protected. We will also support any legal or enforcement actions deemed necessary to restore this site and protect the public.”

On Aug. 29, EPA was asked by the NJDEP to evaluate the facility and take appropriate actions to remove any threat posed by substances in the drums and other containers. EPA currently is evaluating what substances are present in the drums and containers and assessing whether they could cause a chemical release or fire. The site partially is in a federally protected wetland.

EPA began its investigation on Aug. 30. Field tests indicate that some drums contain hazardous materials, including corrosive and flammable chemicals. The preliminary results of samples sent to the laboratory show the presence of volatile organic compounds such as benzene and other hazardous substances such as lead.

Exposure to these pollutants can have serious health effects. Benzene is known to cause cancer and lead is a toxic metal that is especially dangerous to children because their growing bodies can absorb more of it than adults. Lead in children can result in I.Q.

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EPA is continuing to sample the contents of containers and drums at the site. The first set of final laboratory data is expected in the next few weeks. The EPA has secured the facility by installing fencing, warning signs and round the clock surveillance.

Once it completes its investigation, EPA will work with state and local agencies to transport the hazardous waste out of the area and provide for proper disposal. Prior to removal of any of the hazardous materials, the EPA will develop a contingency plan to ensure that the removal of the chemicals is done safely. Fire department and hazardous materials response teams will be consulted and prepared to respond to the site if necessary. Throughout the cleanup, the municipal government and local community will be kept informed.

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